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STABILIZATION OF ESSENTIAL FARM WORKERS IN THE NORTHEAST

Probable effects of the War Manpower Commission's directive regarding deferment of dairy, livestock and poultry farm workers based on a study of farm workers in Pennsylvania.

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Northeast Regional Office  
U.S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Center Building, Upper Darby, Pennsylvania

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## STABILIZATION OF ESSENTIAL FARM WORKERS IN THE NORTHEAST

An increasing shortage of labor on dairy, livestock, and poultry farms has turned attention to the advisability of stabilizing the supply of skilled workers on these farms. Under a recent War Manpower Commission directive, the Selective Service has requested local draft boards to defer workers on dairy, livestock and poultry farms who are necessary men and for whom replacements are not available. The directive makes the deferment of necessary agricultural workers a matter of national policy and places responsibility on local draft boards to avoid taking such workers unless replacements are available. Previously the individual farm business was the major consideration in the deferment of agricultural workers and the responsibility rested upon the selectee and his employer. The directive defines the type of farms that need to be kept in operation and sets up standards to determine who are necessary men.

A dairy, livestock, or poultry farm is defined in the directive on the basis of the number and the production of cows, hens and certain other types of livestock on the farm. Specified livestock other than milk cows are reduced to a milk-cow-equivalent basis according to a schedule <sup>1/</sup>, based on labor requirements, provided by the United States Department of Agriculture. For the first three months after the beginning of the program farms to qualify must have eight milk-cow-equivalents; for the second three months they must have ten milk-cow-equivalents; and after this time the basic requirement is twelve milk-cow-equivalents. In each case certain levels of production are also required.

All workers now deferred on the basis of dependency are to be classified as III-C if they work on qualified dairy, livestock or poultry farms. Other "necessary" workers on dairy, livestock and poultry farms are to be given occupational deferment. In deciding whether workers are necessary, the number of milk-cow-equivalents on the farm in relation to the number of full time, able bodied workers is to be taken into consideration. After the first six months of the stabilization program one worker is expected to handle livestock equivalent in labor requirements to 12 milk cows. Other factors such as available replacements, other farm enterprises, and the training and physical requirements of the job are to be considered in determining whether or not a worker is "necessary."

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<sup>1/</sup> Different schedules were provided depending on whether all feed grain is produced on the farm or purchased. The schedule used for the purposes of this report is for farms buying all grain and is as follows:

1 milk cow equivalent is:

1.2 milk cows (not including young stock and bulls)	
4 beef cows	20 ewes
6 yearlings	100 hens
5 two-year old steers	20 hogs
7 feedlot cattle	800 broilers
	50 turkeys



Some of the implications of this deferment policy can be seen from a survey of Pennsylvania farms made in October 1942 by Pennsylvania State College and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture (Pennsylvania Farm Adjustments To The Wartime Labor Situation, Paper No. 1146, Journal Series, Pennsylvania State College, November 1942). The 484 farms included in the survey are considered representative of the group from which a major portion of the commercial agricultural production in Pennsylvania comes.

Table 1-- Number and percent of farms according to the number of milk-cow-equivalents, Pennsylvania, October 1942.

Number of milk-cow-equivalents	Farms		
	Number	Percent	Cumulative percent
1 - 4	41	8	8
5 - 7	57	12	20
8 - 9	33	7	27
10 - 11	53	11	38
12 and over	300	62	100
Total	484	100	

One out of every five farms included in the survey have fewer than eight milk-cow-equivalents (table 1). Before any workers on these farms are eligible for occupational deferment the number of animal units must be increased. Another 18 percent of the farms have 8-11 milk-cow-equivalents and will have to enlarge their livestock holdings during the next six months if their workers are to remain eligible for occupational deferment. Thus 38 percent of the farms do not, as yet, have the required milk-cow-equivalents.

The Selective Service Classification of workers on farms not having the required milk-cow-equivalents is of immediate significance. Of the workers in this group 19 percent are especially vulnerable, being 18, 19, or 20 years old or in Selective Service Classification 1-A, 1-B, II-A, or II-B. A somewhat larger proportion (29 percent) are now classified as III-A. The remainder (52 percent) are over 45 years of age. Workers on farms having fewer than 12 milk-cow-equivalents are a potential source of labor for other farms.

"Necessary" workers on farms that have 12 or more milk-cow-equivalents are to be given occupational deferment if replacements are not available. Workers on farms on which there are 12 or more milk-cow-equivalents per worker are to be considered "necessary." In table 2 it can be seen that in addition to the 38 percent of the farms that have fewer than 12 milk-cow-equivalents there is another large group of farms (31 percent) that have fewer than 12 milk-cow-equivalents per worker. This group includes two-man farms with 12-23 milk-cow-equivalents and three-man farms with 12-35 milk-cow-equivalents.



Table 2-- Number and percent of farms according to the number of milk-cow-equivalents and the number of workers on the farm. Pennsylvania, October 1942.

	Number				Percent			
	:Three:				:Three:			
	: or :				: or :			
	:One- :man :farms:	:Two- :man :farms:	:more :man :farms:	Total	:One- :man :farms:	:Two- :man :farms:	:more :man :farms:	Total
1 - 11	: 135	42	7	184	56	21	16	38
12 - 23	: 92	119	12	223	38	60	27	46
24 - 35	: 14	32	17	63	6	16	39	13
Over 35	: 1	5	8	14	-	3	18	3
Total	: 242	198	44	484	100	100	100	100
Median	: 10	18	26	15				

Altogether 75 percent of the 784 workers included in the survey are on farms which do not have 12 milk-cow-equivalents per worker. Of this number 25 percent, mostly family workers, are immediately vulnerable to induction (table 3). A similar proportion are in Selective Service Classification III-A. The remainder are over 45 years of age. Only a small proportion of the operators in this group are vulnerable at the present time while almost half of the hired workers and over half of the family workers are vulnerable.

Table 3-- Vulnerability <sup>1/</sup> of workers on specified groups of farms. Pennsylvania, October 1942. (Percent)

Type of worker	Workers on farms having 12 milk- cow-equivalents per worker				Workers on farms not having 12 milk-cow-equival- ents per worker				Workers on farms having median number of milk- cow-equivalents per worker			
	V	I	NV	T	V	I	NV	T	V	I	NV	T
	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Operators	: 5.1:	39.3:	31.6:	76.0:	2.7:	16.6:	37.7:	57.0:	3.9:	29.0:	33.5:	66.4
Family workers	: 6.1:	4.1:	2.1:	12.3:	17.7:	6.8:	6.8:	31.3:	10.0:	7.0:	3.6:	20.6
Hired workers	: 3.6:	6.6:	1.5:	11.7:	5.4:	2.9:	3.4:	11.7:	4.6:	5.3:	3.1:	13.0
Total	: 14.8:	50.0:	35.2:	100.	: 25.8:	26.3:	47.9:	100.	: 18.5:	41.3:	40.2:	100.

<sup>1/</sup> V - vulnerable includes men 18, 19 and 20 years of age and men classified as I-A, I-B, II-A, II-B.

I - intermediate includes men classified as III-A.

NV - not vulnerable includes men over 45 years of age.

T - total

One-quarter of the workers live on farms with at least 12 milk-cow-equivalents per worker and thus clearly qualify for deferment under the directive. Less than 15 percent of this number are immediately vulnerable to induction. One-half are now classified as III-A and the remainder are over 45 years of age. The vulnerable group is fairly evenly divided among operators, family workers, and hired workers.

Although 12 milk-cow-equivalents per worker has been suggested as a satisfactory standard to be used in determining whether or not a worker is necessary, there is some evidence that this figure is too high. The median number of milk-cow-equivalents on the one-man farms included in the study is 10, on two-man farms 18, and on three-man farms 26. If Selective Service Boards used these figures as standards, over 45 percent of all workers would be eligible for occupational deferment. Of this group nearly one-fifth are subject to immediate induction and over two-fifths are in Selective Service Classification III-A (table 3).



